

GUIDELINES FOR DESIGNING A LIBRARY SURVEY
Montana State Library – Library Development Division

Things to think about:

- What information do you want to gather? You can use a survey questionnaire to conduct a needs assessment, to evaluate patron satisfaction with your services, or both. You can also gather demographic information about your service population.
- Whom do you want to hear from? Are you looking for feedback from your patrons, or do you want to hear from non-users, too? This will determine how you design and distribute your survey.
- What will you do with the information you get from the survey? How will you evaluate and present your survey results – and to whom?
- Remember that patron surveys can also be an effective tool for marketing library services. For example, a community survey may inform community members about services they are unaware of.

Designing the survey:

- It's a good idea to include fixed response questions that use a Likert scale, for example:

When you visit the library, are you able to find what you are looking for?

Always	Frequently	Sometimes	Seldom	Never
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- A Likert scale lends itself to use in a matrix, as in survey sample #3 (see below)
- It's a good idea to include an open-ended question or two in your survey
- It's also a good idea to limit your written questionnaire to one or both sides of a single page
- You can create an online survey using a tool like Survey Monkey:
<http://surveymonkey.com>

How will you distribute the survey?

- You can mail a survey questionnaire to the community at large, or to a random sample of registered patrons or community members. Consider the cost of postage for a mailed survey. How will the surveys be returned to the library?
- You can place written questionnaires, pencils and boxes for deposit of completed questionnaires in various locations around town. Using this method, you have an opportunity to hear from non-users as well as library users. Make an attractive display for the questionnaires and you will be marketing the library at the same time.
- Arrange to put surveys as inserts in power bills, newspaper advertising supplements, checked out books, or any other vehicles of dissemination you can think of.
- Provide questionnaires for your patrons to complete during their visits to the library, or post an online survey on the library Web page.
- To insure a higher rate of return, provide incentives for return of surveys, such as having returned surveys entered into a drawing for prizes or giving out library promotional items in exchange for returned surveys.

Create your own survey or adapt an existing survey:

These sample surveys are provided for your use, including:

- Sample #1 – a general, single-question survey for library patrons
- Sample #2 – a single-question survey for library patrons
- Sample #3 – a patron satisfaction survey that uses fixed response questions, a Likert scale matrix, and an open-ended question
- Sample #4 – a user satisfaction and needs assessment survey that uses fixed response questions, check boxes, open-ended questions, and demographic questions

LIBRARY PATRON SURVEY

(Sample #1 – single question survey – insert your library name here)

Please answer the following question and return your response to the library. Your responses will be used in evaluation and planning for library services. Thanks a lot!

Would you recommend the library to a friend?

- If yes, why?

- If no, why?

LIBRARY PATRON SURVEY

(Sample #2 – single question survey – insert your library name here)

Please answer the following question and return your response to the library. Your responses will be used in evaluation and planning for library services. Thanks a lot!

If there is one thing you could change about the library, what would it be?

LIBRARY PATRON SURVEY
(Sample #3 – insert your library name here)

Please select the answers that best represent your opinion. Any additional comments you can provide will help us improve our services. Thank you for your input.

1. When you visit the library, are you able to find what you're looking for?

Always Frequently Sometimes Seldom Never

2. How satisfied are you with the overall services of the library?

Extremely Very Somewhat Not very Not at all

3. How helpful is our staff?

Extremely Very Somewhat Not very Not at all

4. Please rate your satisfaction with each of the following services provided by the library:

Service	Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Not Satisfied	Don't Know
Collections (books, magazines, DVDs, audios, etc)				
Reference Service				
Hours of Operation				
Interlibrary Loan				
Public Access Computers				
Children's and Adult Programs				
Electronic Resources (databases, etc)				

5. Are there any other comments you would like to share concerning the library, its staff, services and/or programs?

Thanks for completing the library survey!

LIBRARY SURVEY
(Sample #4 – insert your library name here)

Please answer the following questions. Any additional comments you can provide will help us improve our services. Thank you for your input.

1. Do you have a library card issued by this library?

Yes

No

2. What do you, or would you like to, use the library for? (check all that apply)

Check out books

Check out movies

Check out audiobooks

Study or do research

Use public computers

Use electronic resources

Use photocopier

Read newspapers or magazines

Use public meeting room

Meet with friends

Attend adult programs

Attend children's programs

Attend a class

Other _____

3. Are there any other services you would like the library to provide?

4. How useful do you find our electronic resources (website, databases, etc.)?

Extremely

Very

Somewhat

Not very

Not at all

5. How do you find out about the library's programs and services? (check all that apply)

Newspaper

Local broadcast media

Library newsletter

Library website

In-library flyers and signs

Library staff

Friends/neighbors

Other: _____

6. If there is one thing you could change about the library, what would it be?

7. OPTIONAL: The following information will be used for demographic purposes only. Please provide information for the person completing the survey.

Female

Male

Child (up to age 12)

Teen (13-19)

Adult (20-54)

Senior (55+)

Thanks for completing the library survey!